

NCI TRANSFORMATION NETOWRK

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Abstract

NCI Transformation Network

Two traditional labor markets, located in North Central Indiana have joined forces to focus on creating a competitive advantage for a larger region facing interrelated challenges and opportunities. The proposed NCI Transformation Network will span 14 (mostly) rural counties, 15 cities and 5,577 square miles. The region is slow-growing; has low educational attainment levels; is aging rapidly; and losing its younger citizens to other parts of the country. Long a bastion for good jobs, particularly in manufacturing, the communities of North Central are in an economic war due to the decline in traditional employment opportunities in large industries and their suppliers. The NCI Transformation Network will catalyze regional stakeholders and resources to accelerate structural changes needed for an economic renaissance in North Central Indiana. Extraordinary, aligned, and sustained actions are required to increase the region's competitiveness.

Purdue University has been selected to serve as the WIRED grantee and Project Administrator. Strategies carried out by the NCI Transformation Network will be organized around *three* major regional change efforts: the NCI Entrepreneurial Collaborative, the NCI "Next Practice" Cluster Initiative, and Maturity Matters Older Worker Initiative. A fourth civic leadership component is woven into the project. Each strategy has identified goals, strategies and expected outcomes.

The NCI Entrepreneurial Collaborative will 1) Make entrepreneurship a vibrant, mainstream part of the region's economic and educational culture. 2) Further develop regional cooperation across multiple jurisdictions in North Central Indiana. 3) Nurture early-stage ventures from start-up through survival and success, creating direct and indirect employment. 4) Establish networks for peer support and learning for entrepreneurs and for community leaders and policy makers who support them.

Goals of the NCI "Next Practice" Cluster Initiative include 1) Increased innovation, sales and job growth among NCI firms in the Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Materials and Agri-business/Food Processing/Technology clusters. 2) Aligned regional workforce, economic development and education systems to support growth in these clusters.

Finally, the Maturity Matters Older Worker Initiative, will 1) Increase postsecondary education attainment rates among the region's mature residents, but especially low-skilled, mature incumbent workers in declining industries who must keep working during their retirement years. 2) Prepare businesses in the region for the demographic reality of the aging population and the mature workforce.

These boldly integrated workforce development, economic development and education initiatives chart the course for transforming the North Central Indiana regional economy. Strategic partnership members committed to this challenge and opportunity are Purdue University, Workforce Development Strategies, Inc., the North Central Indiana Workforce Investment Board; Ivy Tech Community College; Indiana University Kokomo, Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corporation, Tecumseh Area Partnership Workforce Investment Board; Kokomo/Howard County Development Corporation/Inventrek; Greater Lafayette Venture Club; Lafayette School Corporation and several units of local government (see Strength of Partnership). Additional partners will be sought if we are selected as a WIRED grantee.

The NCI Transformation Network initiative is projected at \$15,175,635. Indiana University Kokomo will provide \$175,635 cash match. The NCI Transformation is requesting funding for the WIRED initiative at \$15,000,000.

Timeline

[illegible]

[illegible]

A. Strength of Partnership

Two traditional labor markets, located in North Central Indiana have joined forces to focus on creating a competitive advantage for a larger region facing interrelated challenges and opportunities. The proposed NCI Transformation Network will span 14 counties, 15 cities, and 5,577 square miles (Attachment 1). The region's communities are diverse. The cities of Lafayette/West Lafayette and Kokomo are more urbanized and the most densely populated. The remainder of the counties are primarily rural with some well developed small cities. The region is heavily reliant upon manufacturing (particularly automotive); is slow-growing; has low educational attainment levels; is aging rapidly; and losing its younger citizens to other parts of the country. Strong and effective partnerships have been built in the region by recognizing that extraordinary, aligned, and sustained actions will be required to increase the region's competitiveness.

Cass, Fulton, Howard, Miami, Tipton and Wabash counties have a strong and well developed workforce, economic development, education and community partnerships that have been in existence for many years. These counties are recognized by the U. S. Department of Commerce as an Economic Development District and identified as North Central Indiana (NCI). The region is preparing to engage in the completion of its 3rd Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which is updated every two years as part of an ongoing strategy to adjust to new priorities and issues. Efforts of the North Central Indiana counties have not gone unrecognized. The U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration featured the partnership in the summer 2004 *Economic Development America* publication. The partnership was also featured in the September 2005 National Center of Education and The Economy (NCEE) publication, "Under One Roof: New Governance Structures for Local Economic and Workforce Development". Additionally, the local economic development organizations and Workforce Development Strategies, Inc. (WDSI) created a regional marketing strategy and work together to market not only their individual counties, but the region as a whole. Another regional collaboration is the NCI Healthcare Alliance (convened since 2001), including all seven hospitals in the region, and three manufacturing alliances (convened since 2002), including more than 100 member companies, that develop solutions to healthcare and manufacturing workforce challenges.

The Tippecanoe Region of Tippecanoe, Benton, Carroll, Clinton, Fountain, Montgomery, Warren and White counties are currently working on a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to formalize existing relationships. In addition to the CEDS, the communities have successfully implemented the Synchronist business retention and expansion program in conjunction with the existing workforce partner, Tecumseh Area Partnership, and have implemented the Tippecanoe Region Prospector, a one-stop regional site data base. The region also has a long history of partnering with the Indiana Department of Commerce (IDOC), now Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), in marketing efforts.

Other examples of recent regional successes to align workforce, education and economic development include:

- Attainment of Retirement Research Foundation (RFF) grant by WDSI for Maturity Matters initiative to help the region understand the value of mature workers in the regional economy.
- Attainment of seven Lilly Endowment Community Alliance to Promote Education (CAPE) grants to address the area's most compelling education needs.
- \$1 Million Federal grant to IU Kokomo for a business incubator (Inventrek) to provide support for emerging companies and more faculty engagement, student internships and employment opportunities.
- Attainment of U.S. Economic Development Administration grants by Purdue University to 1) develop strategies for regional competitiveness and rural growth and 2) establish a new university center to promote job creation and capitol investment through technical assistance and applied research.
- Attainment of U. S. Economic Development Administration grant by WDSI for planning assistance.
- Attainment of U.S. Department of Labor President's Community Based Job Training Initiative grant by Ivy Tech Community College.

Building on these successes, the communities of North Central Indiana are ready to implement strategies that will enhance growth and drive transformation across a newly combined 14-county region. We are poised to convene a highly capable and committed team of key leaders representing the civic, business, investor, academic, governmental, entrepreneurial and philanthropic sectors. Purdue University has been selected to serve as the WIRED grantee and Project Administrator with strong leadership from the NCI Transformation Network Steering Committee. The Committee will ensure collaboration and make all decisions relating to the initiative. As the initiative progresses, additional partners will likely be added. WIRED strategic partners include:

WIRED Strategic Partners	Partner Role	Sector
Purdue University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as grantee and project administrator • Member of NCI Transformation Network Steering 	Academic

WIRED Strategic Partners	Partner Role	Sector
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee Center for Regional Development – analytical support and technical assistance support Leadership Engagement Support – procurement of national economist and agenda development with other members, co-convene quarterly dialogues Development of an Office of Engagement presence in Inventrek 	
Workforce Development Strategies, Inc., North Central Indiana Workforce Investment Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of NCI Transformation Network Steering Committee Cluster Initiative Coordinator Facilitator of Advanced Mfg. Initiative Co-Convener of Enterprise Council, Economic Compact, Regional Financing Consortium, Regional Leadership Forum Life Long Learning Institute Design and Implementation Technical Assistance and training to small business owners/human resource personnel on organizational strategies and policies for recruiting, hiring and retaining older workers Implementation of Maturity Matters strategy 	Civic
Ivy Tech Community College- Kokomo and Lafayette campuses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of NCI Transformation Network Steering Committee Technical Middle College Curriculum Development Host for satellite Enterprise Advancement Center Training Provider 	Academic
Indiana University Kokomo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of NCI Transformation Network Steering Committee Curriculum Development K-12 Educator Training Enterprise Advancement Center 	Academic
Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of NCI Transformation Network Steering Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-Convener of Enterprise Council, Economic Compact, Regional Financing Consortium, Regional Leadership Forum 	Business
Tecumseh Area Partnership Workforce Investment Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of NCI Transformation Network Steering Committee Redesign of WorkOne Business Services Development of Tailored Business Services provided by workforce development system providers 	Civic

WIRED Strategic Partners	Partner Role	Sector
Kokomo/Howard County Development Corporation/Inventrek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of NCI Transformation Network Steering Committee • Enterprise Advancement Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Convener of Enterprise Council, Economic Compact, Regional Financing Consortium 	Business Entrepreneur Investor
City of Lafayette, West Lafayette, Kokomo, Howard County, City of Logansport, Peru, Delphi, Monticello, Attica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Direction for Regional Transformation 	Governmental
Greater Lafayette Venture Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of NCI Transformation Network Steering Committee • Entrepreneur and Investor Networking Support 	Investor
Lafayette Jefferson High School through the Lafayette School Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Enterprise Advancement 	K-12

B. Statement of Need

Economic diversification of the economy is critical to North Central Indiana. Long a bastion for good jobs, particularly in manufacturing, the communities of North Central Indiana are in an economic war due to the decline in traditional employment opportunities in large industries and their local supply chains. The region relies heavily on the manufacturing industry to employ more than 19% of its workforce and account for over 40% of its payroll. One-third of Kokomo employment is found in the manufacturing sector, significantly higher than the state's 20 percent. Although producing a wide variety of products, the region is heavily reliant on the automotive sector, an industry in profound structural transformation. The Kokomo area is facing the probable loss of up to 5,000 manufacturing jobs as they wait to learn the fate of Delphi. Delphi, the largest U.S. auto supplier, has been squeezed by production cuts at GM, as it struggles with high labor costs and competition from foreign automakers. Daimler-Chrysler in Kokomo has also announced a layoff that will occur in January 2006. Even if the job loss is not significant, wage and benefit reductions will cause stress in the region. Suppliers and their workforce will also be impacted. Many of the closures and dislocations in the area have been affected by foreign trade as demonstrated by certification for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). Nearly 900 workers from 30 affected companies are currently receiving TAA.

On the other end of the spectrum, there is a potential for a large investment by Toyota in Tippecanoe County. This investment may lead to 1000+ new employment opportunities in manufacturing. While the region will benefit from the gain of high-wage, high skill jobs, small supplier companies are already anticipating the loss of their skilled workforce to Toyota, causing a shortage of skilled workers to backfill vacancies at the same time that the first of the baby boomers begin to retire in 2006.

Over the past six years the size of the regional labor force has remained static, while employment has trended downward and unemployment correspondingly upward (Attachment 2). The total labor force of the region in 2004 was 268, 532 and grew less than 1% in 2005. Current unemployment figures indicate that the regional unemployment rate has edged upward slightly to 5.4%, compared with 4.6% nationally. The 2004 unemployment rate for Howard County was 6.7%, compared to Tippecanoe County's rate of 4.5%. The October 2005 (preliminary) rate for the Kokomo MSA is 7.7% and the city of Kokomo is reporting an October 2005 unemployment rate of 9.1%.

As of 2003, 92.5% of the region's workforce was comprised of people who live and work in the region. The majority of commuting within the region is to Howard and Tippecanoe Counties. This indicates that the region has a fairly self-contained labor force and needs to develop strategies that will sustain and grow new employment in the region to support both a workforce that wants to remain in the region and at the same time attract talent to the area.

The annual household income in 2002 for the region was \$41,414 compared to the US income of \$42,409. As the region continues to face uncertainty, wages and household income, especially in Howard and surrounding counties will be more impacted unless the region is successful in creating, attracting and retaining high-wage, high skill jobs to the area.

A modest population growth of 4-5% by the year 2015 is forecasted in the region as compared to a projected growth of 8% statewide. Overall, the region is projected to decline in population in the age categories of 5-19 and 25-44. The age category of 45-64 will see a significant increase, more than 20,000 people by 2015, and the population category 65+ will also increase by more than 5,000 in the next 10 years. Not only is the region growing slowly, its population is aging more quickly than the rest of the country; one in four NCI residents are over the age of 55 compared with one in five nationally.

High school graduation rates are higher than the state and national rate, but the value placed on education stops here. The regional average B.A. attainment level is 18.7% compared to the national average of 24.4% (Attachment 3). Tippecanoe County (home of Purdue University) leads the way with 33.2% of the population holding a B.A. or higher degree. However, in the remainder of the regional counties B.A. or higher degree rates range from a low of 10.1% both in Clinton and Fountain Counties to a high of 18.1% in Howard County. The region's mature workforce also has low postsecondary education rates, nearly 50% lower in B.A. attainment compared with the rest of the nation, as well as lower Associate Degree attainment levels. With a growing, older workforce dominating the landscape, the region must do a better job of attracting and retaining college graduates of all ages to ensure future economic success.

Indiana's recent Strategic Skills Initiative (SSI) focused on identifying key industries, occupations and skills required by key industries in the region. The SSI also examined the strength and direction of growth for 14 of the region's industry clusters as defined in Indiana's State Economic Development Strategy Plan in 2004. Three Industry Clusters were selected as "key" to the economic growth of the region: Advanced Manufacturing; Advanced Materials; and Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology (Attachment 4). These three industry clusters can generally be classified under the heading "manufacturing." They are complementary and interrelated in that they draw from a similar labor pool and, as further occupational analysis revealed, require many of the same skills. Although taken together they had negative real growth in employment, shift-share analysis revealed modest relative growth of more than 2,500 jobs between 1994 and 2004. Each paid significantly higher than average wages. Together they account for 43% of total wages paid in the region during 2004.

The SSI analysis supported what was already known – the industrial base of the region is centered on manufacturing and manufacturing employers are struggling to find skilled workers. The representative industries in these clusters are those of most concern to local economic development organizations and the units of local government that support them. The question becomes how to support and nurture both existing companies and new enterprises in these, and other high growth industries, and to ensure that the workforce is skilled to support growth in these clusters and make the region a world-class center of excellence in these areas.

Between 2003 and 2005, a regional task force, led by WDSI, conducted in-depth labor market analysis and community engagement to determine regional priorities in response to the trends and data described above. These efforts resulted in support for four priorities: 1) Increase the value placed on education and lifelong learning by individuals, families, and employers. 2) Make the region's "mature workforce" (ages 35-70) a primary economic development selling point. 3) Support the needs of small businesses and entrepreneurs in important industries. 4) Think and act like a region. The strategies included in this proposal are designed to meet these priorities head-on.

C. Strategies for System Transformation

The NCI Transformation Network will catalyze regional stakeholders and resources to accelerate structural changes needed for an economic renaissance in North Central Indiana. Strategies carried out by the NCI Transformation Network will be organized around three major regional change efforts: *the NCI Entrepreneurial Collaborative*, the *NCI "Next Practice" Cluster Initiative*, and the *Maturity Matters™* Older Worker Initiative. WIRED grant money will enable the NCI Transformation Network to leverage both existing and new resources toward integrating these efforts, bringing them to scale, and sustaining them for long-term economic growth and improved quality of life.

Note on Technical Assistance Needs of the NCI Transformation Network: The primary area of technical assistance requested by the NCI Transformation Network is with establishing specific targets for expected outcomes. The NCI Transformation Network is confident in its strategies, the strength of its partnerships, and grass roots support across the region. Although outcomes have been thought through and articulated below, the scale of WIRED and the potential for ramping up major initiatives quickly and simultaneously, causes some uncertainty about settling on specific numbers and percentages of increases, improvements, decreases, etc. that are both realistic and feasible. This is the most critical part of the entire undertaking because the targets will inform the speed, breadth of scale, and resource allocation for each strategy; and, not only will DOL measure success by these targets, local and state stakeholders will as well.

The NCI Entrepreneurial Collaborative

Goals	Strategies
1) Make entrepreneurship a vibrant, mainstream part of the region's economic and educational culture. 2) Further develop regional cooperation across multiple jurisdictions in North Central Indiana. 3) Nurture early-stage ventures from start-up through survival and success, creating direct and indirect employment. 4) Establish networks for peer support and learning for entrepreneurs and for the community leaders and policy makers who support them.	1) Launch an Enterprise Council to oversee development and coordination of regional entrepreneurship resources and assets; 2) Establish Centers for Enterprise Advancement at area secondary and postsecondary educational institutions; 3) Create and implement an Entrepreneurship Economic Development Compact among local elected officials and economic developers. 4) Establish a Regional Financing Consortium focused on Stage One (i.e., microenterprises/firms with 1-9 employees) and Stage Two (10-99 employees) businesses.
Expected Outcomes	
a) Increase in the total number of stage 1 businesses launched in the region, and related increase in job growth; b) Increase in the number of Stage One businesses that transition successfully to Stage Two; c) Increase in microenterprise start-ups by economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs in distressed communities; d) Increase in new business start-ups by youth below age of 25; e) Increased funding for and participation in entrepreneurship training, degree, internship and mentorship programs; f) Increased use of SBA, revolving loan, micro-enterprise and other financing tools.	

Strategy 1: Launch an Enterprise Council to oversee development and coordination of regional entrepreneurship resources and assets.

The NCI Entrepreneurial Collaborative was formed to mobilize resources for ongoing, coordinated strategies that enable aspiring and existing entrepreneurs to drive, and thrive in, the region's economic transformation. The Collaborative emphasizes support to emerging and growth firms in our targeted industry clusters, but also to the growing legion of "main street" and home-based business entrepreneurs (or microenterprises, which comprise 20 percent of the area's total private, non-farm employment) who provide services and products to other business in those sectors. While it did not receive a financial award, the Collaborative was among the top runners-up in the 2004 W.K. Kellogg Foundation competition for entrepreneurship development systems in rural America.

The Collaborative has identified the need for an Enterprise Council to oversee progress in developing area entrepreneurship services, products and resources in ways that continually respond to the needs of entrepreneurs and which support the overall economic development needs of the region. Technical assistance will be sought from the Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship at Discovery Park (Purdue University). The Council will be multi-sector and cross-jurisdictional, growing out of the Entrepreneurship Collaborative. The Enterprise Council will be the organization that will provide the formal structure for the on-going sustainability of the Collaborative. It will eventually evolve to become a stand-alone 501(C) 3 organization and/or forge an alliance with WDSI and Inventrek. The regional council will provide an ongoing venue to explore, enhance and identify ongoing coordinated strategies for entrepreneurial development, including supporting the entrepreneurial needs of the NCI Next Practice Clusters. Council members will represent all of the related development entities in the region and those organizations will be required to bring resources to the table for the on-going sustainability of the project. In year one of the WIRED grant, a structure will be established to create project direction, decisions by consensus, and attainment of all projects. A resource mapping process will be implemented to better determine what resources are available in the area, who provides the services, identification of duplicate services and the value of the services. By understanding the resources available in the region and working together to make the most effective use of the resources, the region will have the ability to sustain the system that has been developed.

Strategy 2: Establish Centers for Enterprise Advancement at area secondary and postsecondary educational institutions.

Centers for Enterprise Advancement will integrate and extend secondary and postsecondary education, workforce training, and community economic development resources throughout the region. The Centers, and their associated web-based, virtual communities, will provide access to entrepreneurship education and training, business information and technical assistance services, and as networking nodes for both aspiring and existing entrepreneurs. The main Center will be established by IU Kokomo in partnership with Inventrek, and located at Inventrek. IU Kokomo received a \$1 million federal grant for joint college-incubator activities with Inventrek, which will be leveraged to establish and develop the Center. Satellite centers will be

established at Ivy Tech Community College, Lafayette Jefferson High School through the Lafayette School Corporation and the Century Career Center through the Logansport Community School Corporation. The IU/Inventrek Center will provide college-level student experiential learning (in partnership with Students for Free Enterprise), faculty engagement in oversight of learning, and development of new curricula in entrepreneurship that link to curricula and programs at the other area postsecondary education institutions. It will be staffed by the IU Kokomo Assistant Director of Business and Community Outreach and one clerical support person. The campus will provide 50% support for these two positions. The high schools/career centers will integrate entrepreneurship curricula and internship/mentorship opportunities with the main IU/Inventrek campus as well as other high schools in the area, and with links to the Small Business Development Center, the WorkOne one-stop career centers. To support participation in entrepreneurship internship and mentorship programs, a dedicated fund will be established with at least one local community foundation. Some technical assistance will also be needed to develop and implement these Centers.

To support the Center for Enterprise Advancement, the IU Kokomo School of Business will develop the following two new courses in collaboration with staff from Inventrek: *New Venture Planning and Screening* and *Entrepreneurship for the Professions*. *New Venture Planning and Screening* will utilize a semester “boot camp” framework to assist students with identifying viable enterprise opportunities, linking students with faculty and industry champions to develop technology and knowledge transfer strategies, and creating detailed, actionable business plans. *Entrepreneurship for the Professions* will explore the entrepreneurial model and its application in a contemporary, integrative approach to management. The courses will also be offered as a professional development option for employees of local firms who are not enrolled in a degree program but who need to add to their knowledge base as part of the requirements for their positions.

Strategy 3: Create and implement an Entrepreneurship Economic Development Compact among local elected officials and economic developers.

Recognizing the profound need for a regional business climate that supports a thriving entrepreneurial culture, the NCI Transformation Network will create an Entrepreneurship Economic Development Compact

through which local economic development agencies (LEDOs) and local elected officials (LEOs) in the region commit to developing and implement an entrepreneur growth and retention plan, focused on growing and nurturing emerging businesses, particularly within the three targeted growth clusters. The Compact will be an update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), completed at the beginning of 2005. Among the approaches that will be explored in the development of the Compact are: a) creating a sales tax mechanism to support high-level entrepreneurial services (an adaptation of the successful model in Littleton, Colorado where a 3% sales tax supports entrepreneurial services through city's Business and Industry Affairs department); b) identifying and removing regulatory and jurisdictional hurdles to business growth; c) creating innovative, competitive tax incentives that emphasize human capital investment, such as a business personal property tax abatement offered to emerging and high growth businesses which, in return, set up portable career learning accounts and/or modified tuition assistance plans for all employees; and d) identifying and jointly pursuing new opportunities for state and federal funding for related projects such as increasing the number of Small Business Innovation Research Programs (SBIR) grants awarded in North Central Indiana.

Strategy 4: Establish a Regional Financing Consortium focused on Stage One and Stage Two businesses.

While access to capital is not seen as a weakness by area entrepreneurs, it also is not seen as a core strength. To ensure that Stage One businesses with 1-9 employees, including microenterprises, and Stage Two firms with 10-99 employees have access to a diverse range of financing products for their growth needs, a Regional Financing Consortium will be established. The Regional Financing Consortium will be comprised of area financial institutions, venture capital investors (such as the Lafayette-West Lafayette Venture Club), municipal and county governments, Local Initiatives Support Corporations (LISCs), and community foundations, as well as permanent membership of Enterprise Council leaders.

The Financing Consortium will identify gap financing needs and work collaboratively to develop appropriate financing products and services that entrepreneurs and business owners will be able to utilize. Ultimately, the Consortium will play a crucial role in nurturing Early-Stage and Stage One ventures (including

microenterprises) from start-up through survival and success as a Stage Two company, creating direct and indirect employment. This effort will include increased use of existing SBA, revolving loan, microenterprise and other financing tools; creation of a pool of early-stage venture capital (in the \$5,000 to \$250,000 range); and increased opportunities for reduced interest and guaranteed loan programs. We will also explore the creation, through the Consortium, of a locally funded financial aid package for older students to support our Maturity Matters strategies (see page 23).

WIRED grant money will support the initial formation and operation of the Financing Consortium. In year one, the NCI Transformation Network will determine which partner will have administrative responsibility for staffing the Consortium, though likely candidates are WDSI, Inventrek, or the Center for Enterprise Advancement.

NCI “Next” Practice Cluster Initiative

Goals	Strategies
1) Increase innovation, sales and job growth among NCI firms in the Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Materials and Agri-business/Food Processing/Technology clusters. 2) Align regional workforce, economic development and education systems to support growth in these clusters.	1) Activate, support and expand formal NCI industry clusters in the three target industries; 2) Bring the NCI Advanced Manufacturing Education Initiative to scale, including establishing a Technical Middle College, and adapt for the Advanced Materials and Agri-business clusters.
Expected Outcomes	
a) Coherent vision for next generation manufacturing, materials and agri-business in the region among area firms, economic developers, workforce developers, and educators; b) Increase in number of successfully retained or expanded businesses within the three clusters, resulting in increased job growth; c) Increase in number of new innovation and sales alliances among cluster-member firms; d) Increased enrollment at area postsecondary educational institutions via new Technical Middle College, and improved articulation agreements that facilitate student progression from Associates to Masters Degree levels; e) Increase in the number of regional college graduates with mastery in relevant competencies who are recruited by NCI companies; f) Improved visibility both within and outside of the region for north central Indiana as an emerging center for world-class advanced manufacturing and agri-business.	

Strategy 1: Activate, support and expand formal NCI industry clusters in the three target industries.

As outlined in the statement of need, the three target industries – Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Materials, and Agri-business – are those of greatest interest and concern to regional leaders. From the dual perspectives of (1) converting the region’s existing talent base into a focused center of excellence in these

areas, and (2) continuing to provide the area with ample high-skill, high-wage job opportunities, these three clusters show huge potential. That potential, however, may also be severely curtailed by the inability of existing NCI companies step out of day-to-day “survival mode” in order to recognize and assess their own potential for business improvement and growth, and to collaborate with key regional economic, workforce, education, and industry technical assistance resources to support that growth.

WIRED funds will be used to create for each cluster a pool of financial resources to support identified workforce, education, industry research, and industry technical assistance needs and initiatives. This resource fund will also provide employers with a significant incentive for participation in cluster activities.

The NCI Next Practice Cluster Initiative will be led by Purdue University’s Center for Regional Development and WDSI. Purdue was recently awarded a grant from the US EDA for cluster innovation. Purdue and WDSI will work collaboratively to activate the three clusters using research and best practices identified from the EDA grant. Several Purdue initiatives, including the Center for Advanced Manufacturing, the Technical Assistance Program, Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and others will be leveraged to help support the clusters. WDSI has a strong track record of launching and sustaining successful alliances in manufacturing and health care that focus on the workforce development and training needs of those industries. WDSI and Purdue will work with the Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corporation (L/WL EDC), the Kokomo-Howard County Development Corporation (KHCDC) and Inventrek, the Kokomo area technology development incubator, to identify and recruit area companies to participate in the Next Practice initiative. WDSI will serve as the primary convener and facilitator of all cluster-based activity. Each of the three clusters will be assigned one full-time professional cluster coordinator, housed at WDSI, to ensure that the day-to-day management of cluster activities is high quality and responsive to participating employers and resource partners. Primary activities of the Next Practice initiative, and designated lead organizations, are as follows:

Convene and facilitate cluster firm interaction
Help firms to identify business, product development and sales alliance opportunities (WDSI and IU Kokomo); Identify cluster-relevant research, development and commercialization opportunities (Purdue); Help firms to identify human and financial capital needs that will support alliances (WDSI, IU-Kokomo and Inventrek); Strengthen networking and associated behavior among NCI cluster firms and with external

cluster communities (WDSI); Continually improve and develop value-added cluster communications and activities (all partners).
Align business attraction, retention and expansion services
Identify gaps in supply-chain, value-add, and support services required by cluster firms (L/WL EDC, KHCDC, Purdue, and Inventrek); Establish specific industrial recruitment, retention and expansion programs for target clusters (L/WL EDC, KHCDC and Inventrek); Build cluster markets (L/WL EDC and KHCDC); leverage cluster success to create and/or adjust regional branding ((L/WL EDC, KHCDC and WDSI).
Align workforce system to cluster needs
Obtain state support for cluster-focused workforce programs, as needed (WDSI and Tecumseh Area Partnership); Articulate education, training and career path needs of cluster firms (WDSI and Tecumseh Area Partnership); Create or expand regional skills alliances or supply-chain training programs to meet cluster needs (WDSI and Tecumseh Area Partnership); Offer training and education programs responsive to cluster needs (Ivy Tech, IU-Kokomo, Purdue).

Once established, WDSI and Purdue will implement a continuous evaluation process to track, document and communicate the progress and impact of the clusters' participating firms and on the regional economy as a whole. Through this communication process, the partners will strive to foster the development of cluster leadership among participating businesses to deepen the level of buy-in and potential for long-term sustainability.

Implementation of the NCI Advanced Manufacturing Education Initiative and the NCI Entrepreneurial Collaborative will intersect and inform the roll-out of the clusters. For example, the Advanced Manufacturing Education initiative includes the launch of a Technical Middle College (described on page 21) in partnership with Ivy Tech and area high schools, to address a key aspect of skill and human capital needs in this cluster.

Strategy 2: Bring the NCI Advanced Manufacturing Education Initiative to scale and adapt for the Advanced Materials and Agri-business clusters.

Locally available postsecondary manufacturing education and training currently focuses on either a technician level or a generalist model. There is little exposure to advanced manufacturing and supervision thereof, in an Associate, Baccalaureate or Masters Degree. Firms participating in regional manufacturing alliances have expressed concerns about the missing emphasis on skills associated with advanced manufacturing in the curricula.

In response, the NCI Transformation Network will fully develop and bring to scale the NCI Advanced Manufacturing Education Initiative. The Initiative involves WDSI and multiple secondary and postsecondary institutions, including: Ivy Tech Community College, Indiana University Kokomo, Purdue School of Technology at Kokomo/Lafayette, Kokomo Area Career Center (enrolling high school students in Howard County), Century Career Center (enrolling high school students in Cass County), and Heartland Career Center (enrolling high school students in Miami and Wabash Counties) and Lafayette Jefferson High School. The core components of the initiative include developing a vision of next generation manufacturing vision to inform core competencies, and curriculum and program development, and the launching of a Technical Middle College to strengthen the pipeline of high school and college graduates with the interest in and skills for careers with manufacturing companies in the area.

Develop a “next generation manufacturing” vision. Although lean manufacturing has been adopted by many firms in the area, there is considerable disagreement among manufacturers about what to call “advanced” or “innovative” manufacturing, let alone whether or not to adopt it. Even with the adoption of lean processes over the past few decades, there are a sizeable number of firms in our region that still employ traditional, mass production manufacturing methods. The NCI Transformation Network will facilitate a region-wide conversation among industry and education stakeholders in order to identify the collective, competitive assets and characteristics of the region’s manufacturers as a starting point for defining manufacturing’s future in the area, and to communicate the competitive positioning of the region and its companies. We will then develop a definition and vision for “next generation manufacturing” that builds on the strengths and assets of this region, yet raises the bar as to what the future needs to look like to support the growth and expansion of existing firms and new enterprises focused on next generation products, processes, and work organization. Finally, we will identify core competency and resource gaps that could prevent the region’s firms, educators, economic developers and other stakeholders from achieving the vision. WDSI will be the lead organization and will facilitate three region-wide brainstorming sessions through the NCI Next Practice Cluster framework, working closely with the other Network partners. Parallel visioning

sessions for the other two clusters – Advanced Materials and Agri-business – will subsequently be convened as a basis for informing cluster activity and improvements in regional education and training.

Establish a Technical Middle College. The new *Technical Middle College* will build on a prior ‘Pathways to College’ partnership funded by the Lilly Endowment in 2000. The Pathways partnership has helped over 4,500 students prepare an educational development plan and has provided dual credit for nearly 5,000 students. The Technical Middle College will provide expanded dual enrollment and summer camp opportunities for junior and senior high school students in manufacturing courses that can lead to an AAS Technical degree at Ivy Tech Community College. The courses taken by students will also have transfer options to four-year manufacturing and engineering degrees at Purdue School of Technology at Kokomo/Lafayette such as Organizational Leadership and Supervision and Engineering and Computer Electrical Technology. A long-term objective is to expand the offerings to include curriculum addressing other technical skills (including the two other targeted clusters) and to establish a permanent, physical presence on the Ivy Tech campus. A portion of year one WIRED grant funds will also be used to study, consult with, and adapt models from successful schools from other parts of the country, such as the Washtenaw Technical Middle College at Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor, Michigan. If an expanded Technical Middle College concept becomes viable, second and third year WIRED resources, as well as resources beyond the WIRED grant, will be sought to fund that expansion.

Also offered through the Technical Middle College will be new summer camp experiences and internship and co-op opportunities. The *Summer Tech Series* will offer seven one-week, 32-hour camps in the following areas: 1) Electrical Basics, including Atomic Theory, Conductors and Circuits; 2) Electrical Advanced, including Programmable Logic Control; 3) Computer Numerical Controls; 4) Computer-Aided Design; 5) Animation; 6) Welding; and 7) Business Basics. Students will be able to earn up to 1.5 credits per camp which can also be applied as Technical Electives to technical certificates and associate degree programs at Ivy Tech Community College.

New Masters-level Advanced Manufacturing Management course. The School of Business at IU Kokomo offers an evening MBA degree. IU’s master course inventory does not include a course in

advanced manufacturing management. With WIRED grant funding, faculty in the IU Kokomo School of Business will develop a course, tentatively titled *Advanced Manufacturing Management*, targeted to managerial-level employees of area firms, including employees in science and engineering positions. Students completing this new course may then opt to pursue some of the higher level topics in an existing elective course, *C550: Managing Quality*.

Maturity Matters

Goals	Strategies
1) Increase postsecondary education attainment rates among the region's mature residents, but especially low-skilled, mature incumbent workers in declining industries who must keep working during their retirement years. 2) Prepare businesses in the region for the demographic reality of the aging population and mature workforce.	1) Reinvent the region's adult and postsecondary education offerings through the establishment of a Lifelong Learning Institute that makes second career, short-term training, and hands-on learning opportunities desirable, affordable and convenient for mature workers; 2) Provide technical assistance and training to small business owners and human resources personnel on organizational strategies and policies for recruiting, hiring and retaining older workers.
Expected Outcomes	
a) Increased enrollment in, and completion of, certificate, degree, and training programs in high-skill, high wage growth occupations by mature workers; b) Increase in same by low-skill, mature incumbent workers in declining industries; c) Increase in the number of employers in the region that implement mature worker human capital best practices; d) Increase in full- and part-time jobs retained or gained by mature workers; e) Increase wage by mature workers.	

Strategy 1: Establish a Lifelong Learning Institute that makes second career, short-term training, and hands-on learning opportunities desirable, affordable and convenient for mature workers.

Research conducted by WDSI in 2005 (funded by the Retirement Research Foundation) revealed that a significant number of mature workers in the region will have to continue working in their retirement years. Yet, this cohort has very low postsecondary educational attainment rates compared to the rest of the nation which will make it difficult for this growing population to continue working at wage levels that will sustain their quality of life. At the same time, we also learned that, while mature and older area residents love to learn, they are skeptical about the importance of higher education to their economic future. Yet, As the workplace has changed, so have the skills and knowledge required to continue or return to employment during retirement years.

The NCI Transformation Network plans to pioneer a Lifelong Learning Institute that is built on the best practices available in accelerated degree programs, short-term credentialed learning opportunities, articulation agreements, expanded prior learning assessment practices, financial aid and satellite/extension site delivery mechanisms appropriate to the learning needs and preferences of mature workers and students. In Year One, a task force will be convened to identify best practice (such as the Osher Institute affiliated lifelong learning institutes), outline major policy barriers to developing the Institute, and develop an implementation plan to be launched at the beginning of Year Two. Consideration will also be given to evaluation and assessment issues, involvement of older learners in 'learning and earning' opportunities at the current job site, as well as re-entry internships for returning, retraining employees. Examining the perceived benefits of lifelong learning and how they apply to NCI's mature workforce and the region's "next generation manufacturing" vision will be undertaken by the taskforce. Finally, in partnership with the Regional Financing Consortium, the task force will explore the creation of a locally funded older student financial aid and scholarship package.

Strategy 2: Provide technical assistance and training to small business owners and human resources personnel about recruiting, hiring and retaining older workers.

Another major finding of WDSI's Maturity Matters research is that the vast majority of employers in the area are completely unprepared for how to respond to the aging workforce in concrete ways that will positively affect their business objectives. In cooperation with regional Economic Development Directors, Chambers of Commerce and SBDC, a focused, short term training course will be developed by WDSI. The course will utilize the findings and "*Maturity Matters: Handbook for Human Resource Personnel*", developed through a 2005 grant from RRF. Business owners and HR professionals will be familiarized with the demographics of and business impact of aging in the region, and will participate in learning exercises that help them to identify retention, recruitment, training and re-training steps they can take within their businesses. WDSI will provide technical assistance to firms over and beyond this training course. Technical assistance will include conducting age audits to profile age-related issues that are or will affect an employer's business, as well as guidance and information on implementing best business practices; addressing benefits such as health

insurance, flexible jobs and schedules, pension plans, and age diversity training; projecting retirement trends for the workforce over the next five years; and determining positions and departments where transfer of knowledge is critical and where there are potential skill gaps in the business. A strategic marketing effort to underscore the value of the mature worker within the region will be conducted.

Leadership Engagement and Community Outreach

Goals	Strategies
1) Build a more proactive and visionary leadership for regional transformation. 2) Think and act like a region.	1) Convene a Regional Leadership Development Forum; 2) Launch a creative, long-term communications program that provides more visibility about the region's strengths and opportunities.
Expected Outcomes	
a) Common economic transformation vision for the fourteen county region; b) Leadership development process; c) Transformed regional competitiveness model; d) Multi-jurisdictional solutions; and e) Regional identity.	

Strategy 1: Convene a regional leadership development forum. Strong leadership and collaboration is the means to regional transformation. Globalization has changed the fundamentals of economic development. Critical mass is required to compete globally. This challenge requires the region to think differently in terms of leadership development; vision; cooperation; inclusion; and regional governance structures.

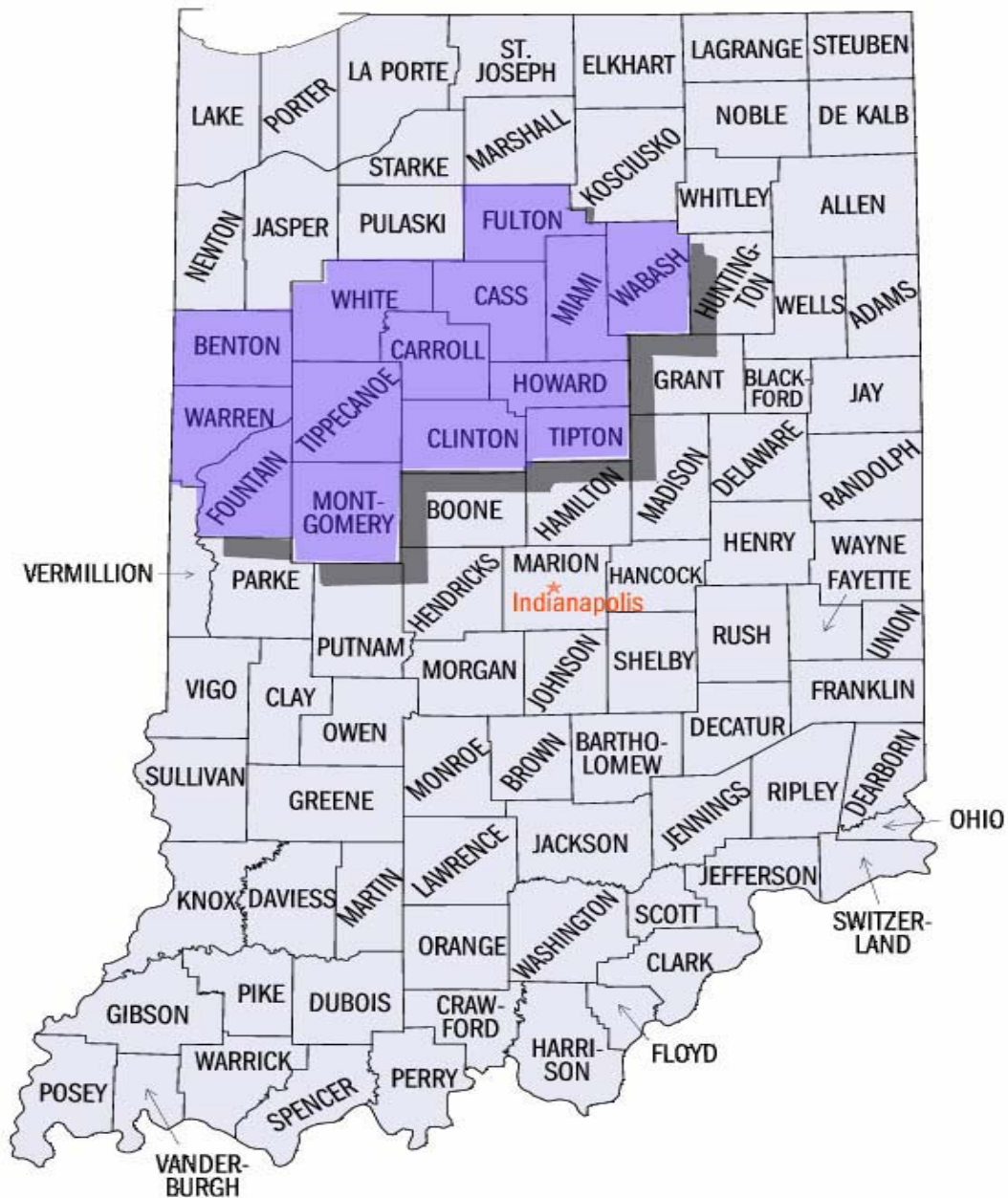
The NCI Leadership Development Forum will be led by Purdue University's Center for Regional Development (CRD), L/WL EDC, and WDSI. CRD will engage a national economic strategist to focus and guide the regional transformation. L/WL EDC and WDSI will work collaboratively to assemble strong leadership from across the region that has desire and commitment to be part of a team that will be instrumental in the transformation of the region's economy. The Leadership Development Forum will meet quarterly, facilitated by the national economic strategist. On-going follow-up and support will be provided in between sessions by L/WL EDC and WDSI. L/WL EDC and WDSI will work with the two Economic Development Districts to facilitate the development of a transformed regional economic development

process. L/WL EDC and WDSI will form a taskforce comprised of the region's county commissioners, mayors and other civic leaders to explore interest in and options for multi-jurisdictional solutions for creating new tax and revenue generating structures that support a knowledge economy and explore the establishment of a Regional Development Authority.

Strategy 2: Launch a creative, long-term communications program that provides more visibility about the region's strengths and opportunities. Thinking and acting like a region is important because many business activities are embedded in the area-wide economy, such as access to customers, supply of workers, buy-supply with other firms, etc. Regional factors affect business site location, especially for new and expanding businesses. L/WL EDC and WDSI, with the guidance of the Leadership Development Forum will launch a creative, long-term communications program that provides more visibility about the region's strengths and opportunities and positions North Central Indiana as a region with a skilled, educated and capable workforce and articulates the positive economic and quality of life indicators of the region.

Attachment 1

NCI Transformation Network



Attachment 2

North Central Indiana

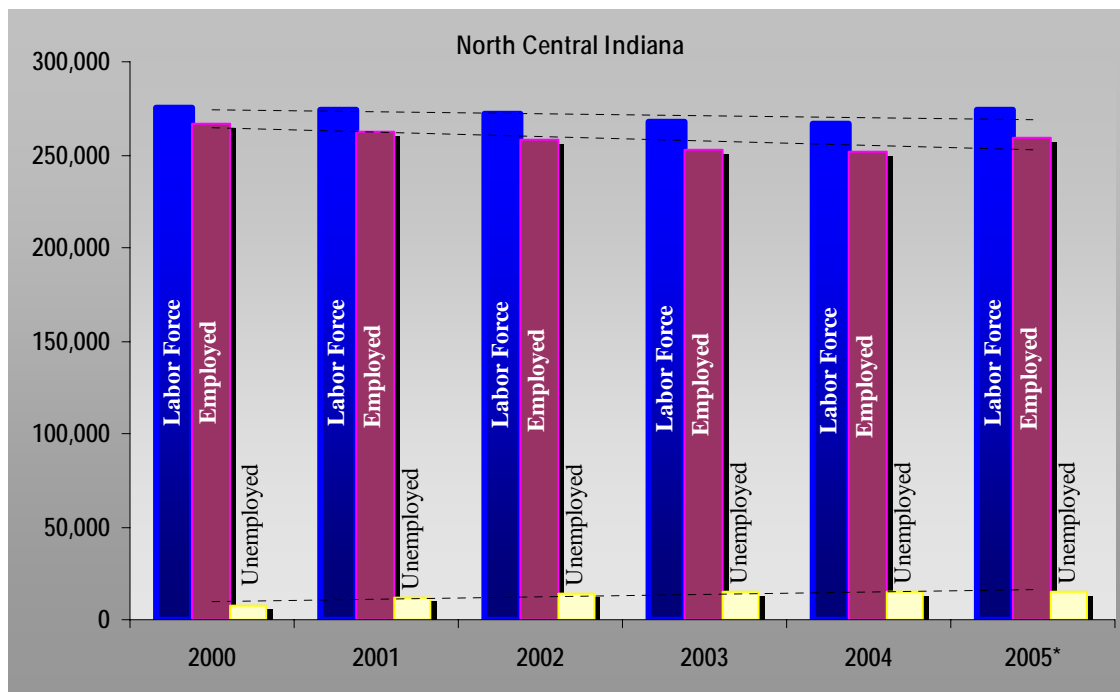
<i>Year</i>	<i>Labor Force</i> Annual Avg.	<i>Employed</i> Annual Avg.	<i>Unemployed</i> Annual Avg.	<i>Unemployment Rate</i> Annual Avg.	<i>IN</i> Annual Avg.	<i>US</i> Annual Avg.
2000	274,798	267,073	7,725	2.8	2.9	4.0
2001	274,087	262,110	11,977	4.4	4.2	4.7
2002	272,386	258,410	13,976	5.1	5.2	5.8
2003	267,704	252,494	15,210	5.7	5.3	6.0
2004	266,481	251,796	14,685	5.5	5.2	5.5
2005*	273,859	258,806	15,053	5.5	5.0	4.6

This region includes the following: Benton County, IN; Carroll County, IN; Cass County, IN; Clinton County, IN; Fountain County, IN; Fulton County, IN; Howard County, IN; Miami County, IN; Montgomery County, IN; Tippecanoe County, IN; Tipton County, IN; Wabash County, IN; Warren County, IN; White County, IN

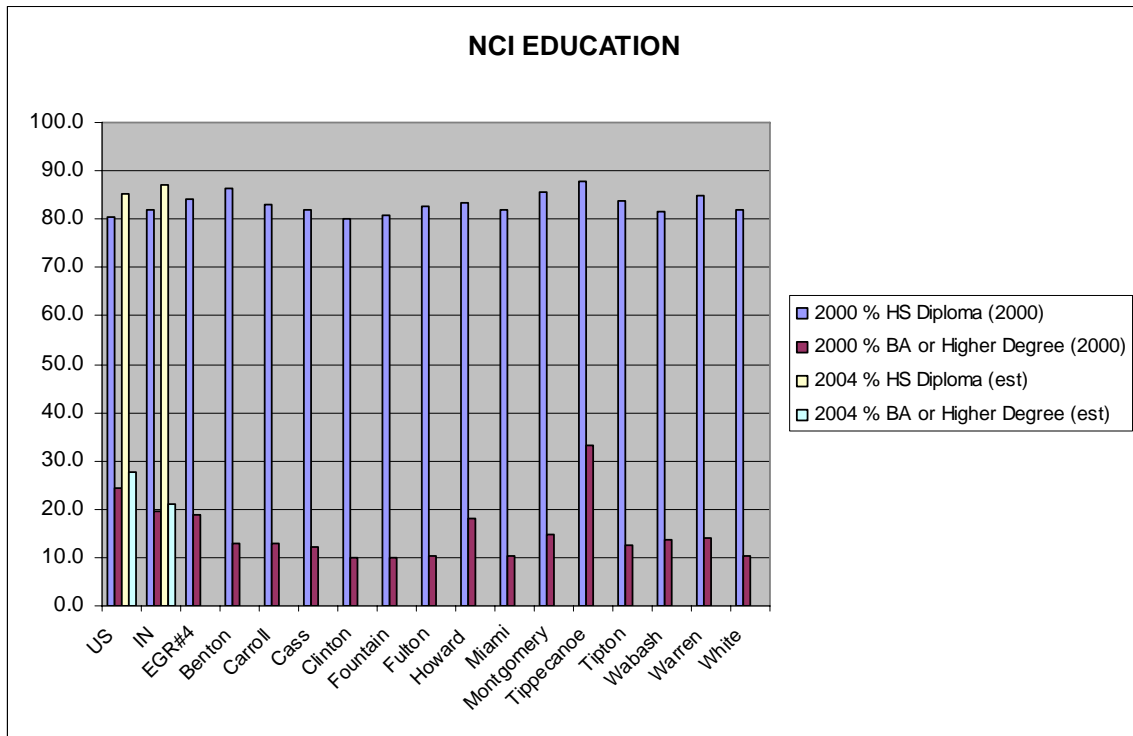
Data source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Calculations: Indiana Business Research Center, IU Kelley School of Business

[This table was produced by STATS Indiana : 1/4/2006 8:51:06 AM](#)

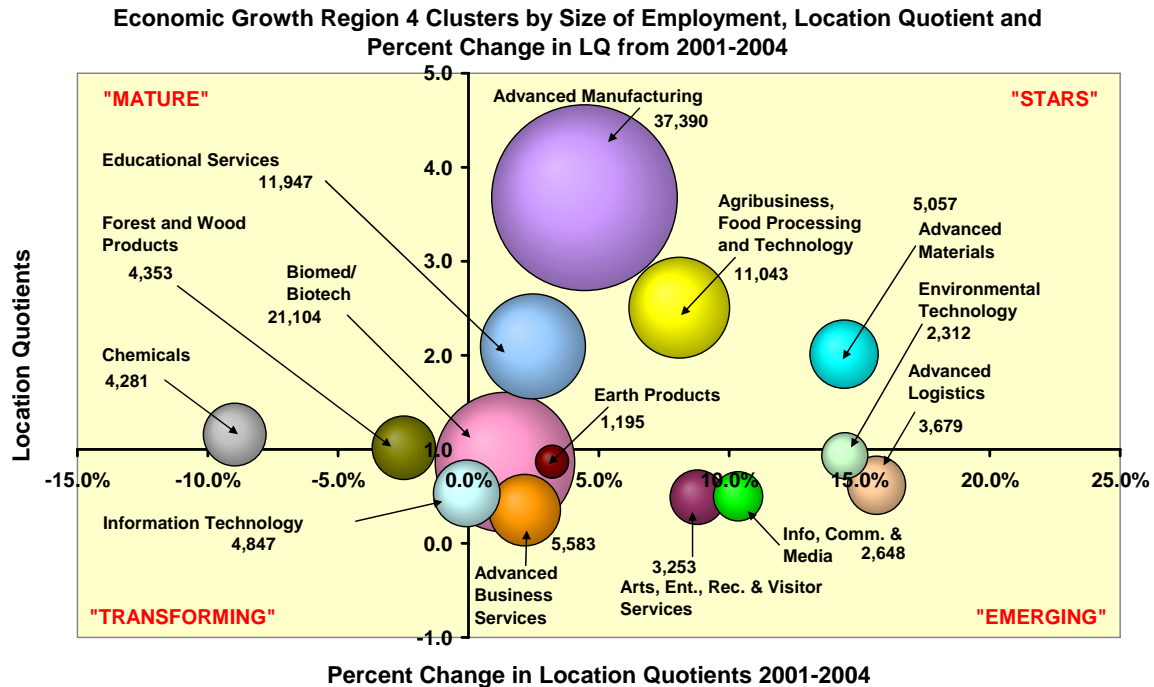


Attachment 3



Source: www.stats.indiana.edu/sip

Attachment 4



Prepared for Indiana Economic Growth Region 4 by Purdue Center for Regional Development using ES202 Data provided by the IBRC

EGR 4 SUMMARY CLUSTER ANALYSIS 2001-2004

Industry Cluster Title	Total Employment 2004	Percent Change in Employment, 2001-2004	Cluster Percent Share of Total Industry 2001	Cluster Percent Share of Total Industry 2004	Cluster Location Quotient 2004	Percent Change in Cluster LQ 2001-2004	Total Annual Wages 2004	EGR4 Average Annual Wage 2004	Percent Change in Average Annual Wage 2001-2004 (adjusted)	US Average Annual Wage 2004	Total Number of Establishments 2004	Change in Establishments 2001-2004
Total, all industries	197,781	-3.9%	100.0%	100.0%	1.00	0.0%	6,892,974,721	34,852	4.3%	39,348	10,301	-19
Specialized, Increasing Concentration												
Advanced Manufacturing	37,390	-14.9%	21.4%	18.9%	3.68	4.5%	2,236,265,111	59,809	13.6%	54,577	257	-15
Educational Services	11,947	5.9%	5.5%	6.0%	2.10	2.5%	505,343,248	42,299	-1.7%	38,146	48	0
Agribusiness, Food Processing and Technology	11,043	0.8%	5.3%	5.6%	2.51	8.1%	422,752,121	38,282	5.0%	31,583	306	-6
Advanced Materials	5,057	-8.5%	2.7%	2.6%	2.01	14.4%	296,272,567	58,587	4.6%	63,850	30	-3
Specialized, Decreasing Concentration												
Forest and Wood Products	4,353	-8.0%	2.3%	2.2%	1.02	-2.5%	127,888,102	29,379	1.4%	36,207	148	-12
Chemicals	4,281	-19.7%	2.6%	2.2%	1.16	-9.0%	245,813,069	57,420	10.2%	52,021	101	-4
Not Specialized, Increasing Concentration												
Biomedical/Biotechnical (Life Sciences)	21,104	3.9%	9.9%	10.7%	0.86	1.4%	718,486,056	34,045	7.4%	42,073	780	-11
Advanced Business Services	5,583	-2.0%	2.8%	2.8%	0.35	2.2%	221,156,966	39,613	1.4%	69,650	1,077	62
Advanced Logistics	3,679	7.9%	1.7%	1.9%	0.62	15.7%	124,054,887	33,720	2.6%	41,210	385	-13
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Visitor Services	3,253	6.0%	1.5%	1.6%	0.49	8.8%	45,753,510	14,065	-1.3%	25,822	225	16
Information, Communications and Media	2,648	-9.3%	1.4%	1.3%	0.50	10.3%	78,468,316	29,633	5.6%	59,817	162	2
Environmental Technology	2,312	11.7%	1.0%	1.2%	0.93	14.4%	89,850,893	38,863	14.8%	58,912	130	12
Earth Products	1,195	-6.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.87	3.2%	46,086,212	38,566	-3.5%	47,649	55	-5
Not Specialized, Decreasing Concentration												
Information Technology	4,847	-18.3%	2.9%	2.5%	0.53	-0.1%	219,237,401	45,232	11.7%	72,552	274	19

Prepared by Purdue Center for Regional Development using ES202 data provided by IBRC September, 2005

Attachment 5

Letters of Commitment

January 4, 2006

The Honorable Mitch Daniels
State of Indiana
Office of the Governor
State House, Second Floor
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Daniels:

Purdue University is enthusiastic about the possibility that the 14-county North Central Indiana region will be the focus for a Department of Labor WIRED initiative (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development). Purdue is committed to helping grow Indiana's economy and we look forward to our involvement in the North Central Indiana Transformation Network. As a Strategic Partner in this initiative Purdue, along with the other partners, will help usher in an economic renaissance in the region. Specifically, Purdue will take lead roles in the following components of the proposed plan:

- Participation on the North Central Indiana Transformation Network Steering Committee
- Analytical support and technical assistance support from the Purdue Center for Regional Development
- Leadership Engagement support by (1) procuring a national economist (2) agenda development, and (3) co-convene quarterly dialogues
- Development of an Office of Engagement presence in Jovantek

We will also assist, as needed, in curriculum development and technical assistance using resources from the Technical Assistance Program, Manufacturing Extension Partnership, the Center for Advanced Manufacturing, and other university programs.

We are confident that the proposal being submitted outlines a set of innovative strategies that will not only help grow the North Central Indiana economy but will also result in a base of knowledge that can help other regions grow and help link other universities to innovative regional strategies.

I thank you for your support of this proposal. Please let me know if you have any questions or need further information to help determine Purdue's support for this proposed initiative.

Sincerely,



Martin C. Brubaker
President



December 30, 2005
Governor Mitch Daniels
Statehouse, Room 333
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor,

As Chancellor of Ivy Tech Community College-Kokomo, Wabash and Logansport, I would like to express my resolute support for the WIRED Initiative. This initiative will allow us to integrate workforce, education and economics in North Central Indiana. As a key partner in this collaborative effort we are committed to the objectives of this grant, and look forward to working with economic developers and our four-year institutions in accomplishing a common goal.

I believe that education is the single most important element in improving economic stability and quality of life in our communities. Access to higher education increases economic potential. Ivy Tech Community College has experienced continued growth in the state and is essential to economic growth in North Central Indiana. We are the leader in education, providing educational opportunities that enhance skills for our citizens. We pride ourselves in providing just-in-time, and flexible training and educational programs.

Statistically speaking, our region does not fair as well as other regions or states with regard to educational attainment. This grant will allow us to take a proactive stance in improving economic growth in our region. Demand for trained personnel is strong today and will continue to become even stronger as the "baby boom" generation reaches retirement age. Industry diversification and incumbent worker transitions are critical issues, as uncertainty in the auto industry looms in our region. A skilled workforce is also critical to attract business and industry seeking to locate in our region.

In conclusion, I unreservedly support this cooperative effort. As Chancellor of Ivy Tech Community College-Kokomo, Logansport and Wabash, I am committed to this cause and will take all necessary actions necessary to ensure that this project is successful. I ask that you justly give this proposal the tremendous measure of consideration deserved. The project will lead to a promising future for our region, as well as our great state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Daily'.

Steve Daily, Chancellor
Ivy Tech Community College
Kokomo, Logansport and Wabash

1815 EAST MORGAN
P.O. BOX 1373
KOKOMO, INDIANA 46903-1373
765-459-0561
FAX 765-454-5111

Ivy Tech is an accredited, equal opportunity, affirmative action community college.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
KOKOMO



OFFICE OF THE
CHANCELLOR

January 3, 2006

Emily Stover DeRocco
Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training
U.S. Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Re: North Central Indiana proposal in response to the Workforce Innovation in
Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative, SGA/DFA PY-05-04,
CFDA No. 17.261

Dear Ms. DeRocco:

Indiana University Kokomo is the public baccalaureate institution serving the North Central Indiana region. Established in 1945, the regional campus is among the eight campuses of Indiana University. The campus is currently engaged in a strategic planning process that is being guided by the recognition of the need to diversify the economy, the need to increase educational attainment across the region and the need to keep more college graduates in the region. As noted in the North Central Indiana proposal, our campus has already undertaken substantial initiatives to address these needs. Additionally, just last month I challenged our region to assist in helping the region reach at least the Indiana average in educational attainment in the next five years.

Concerning sustainability of our proposed efforts, the campus will seek through best efforts to sustain internships at the level developed. Curricula to be developed will be incorporated in the regular semester course schedules assuring sustainability. Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) will seek other resources to sustain its effort. The campus budget includes support for the entrepreneurship center, and the campus will increase that support as the center proves its value to the region.

We are pleased to be a partner in this proposal to further address the identified needs. Developing a culture for entrepreneurship, increasing college degree attainment, and stemming the brain drain are critical to developing the regional economy of North Central Indiana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ruth Person".

Ruth Person
Chancellor

2300 South
Washington Street
Post Office Box 9003
Kokomo, Indiana
46904-9003

765-455-9225
Fax: 765-455-9444



Tuesday, January 03, 2006

Governor Mitch Daniels
State of Indiana
Statehouse Rm 203
Indianapolis IN 46204-279

RE: Department of Labor grant opportunity Workforce Innovation for Regional Economic Development

Dear Honorable Daniels:

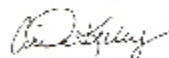
The Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corporation is appreciative of the opportunity to partner with other economic development organizations, workforce development entities, education, and private and public partners to submit this application for the WIRED initiative. This important funding opportunity will help to strengthen, enhance and expand the existing partnerships throughout the region.

As an organization dedicated to promoting the economic development and well being of our community, we recognize that we must think globally but act regionally to address the transitioning workforce issues. This grant provides our region with an opportunity to expand our current efforts in a collaborative manner to focus on strategies that will enhance growth in all our communities and create opportunities to drive a transformation strategy across our 14-county region. We are eager to move forward with the initiatives outlined in the application and are committed to its success.

The Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corporation is committed to this initiative as outlined in our regional application and is further committed to serve the region as the grant administrator.

Again, we appreciate this opportunity. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Cinda Kelley, Acting Executive Director
Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corporation

LAFAYETTE - WEST LAFAYETTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
P.O. Box 511 • Lafayette, Indiana 47902-0511 • 765.742.0095 • fax: 765.742-6276
web: www.lsedcc.org



January 3, 2006

The Honorable Mitch Daniels
Office of the Governor
Statehouse
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2797

Dear Governor Daniels:

As President of the Kokomo/Howard County Development Corporation (KHDC), I look forward to working with the North Central Transformation Network to help implement the activities in the proposed Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative. The KHDC has a 25-year history of working in partnership with business, government, education and workforce development leaders and the other local economic development organizations in our region. I'm particularly excited about the active role Inventrek (a KHDC initiative) will play in the transformation of our new Economic Growth Region 4. Our goal is the same as that of the WIRED initiative: to provide expanded educational, employment and advancement opportunities for workers in this region. We would welcome to the region the additional funding and technical assistance provided by the initiative.

Please contact me to let me know how the KHDC can be of further assistance in the application process. I look forward to working together to increase educational and employment opportunities available for the residents of this part of Indiana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gregory P. Aaron', written in a cursive style.

Gregory P. Aaron
President

WORKFORCE

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, INC.

1200 Kitty Hawk, Suite 208, Peru, IN 46970 – Phone (765) 689-9950 – Fax (765) 689-9971

January 3, 2006

Governor Mitch Daniels
Indiana State House
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Governor Daniels;

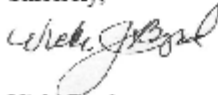
I am pleased to confirm Workforce Development Strategies, Inc.'s willingness to support and participate in the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative, NCI Transformation Network.

The strategies detailed in the WIRED proposal were carefully considered to meet the current and future needs of the regional area communities. We are committed to serve as a member of NCI Transformation Network Steering Committee in implementing the proposed strategies.

We further understand that WDSI will have responsibilities as Cluster Initiative Coordinator, Facilitator of Advanced Mfg. Initiative, Co-Convener of Enterprise Council, Economic Compact, Regional Financing Consortium, and the Regional Leadership Forum. We also accept the duties involved with design and implementation of the Life Long Learning Institute and technical assistance and training to small business owners/human resource personnel on organizational strategies and policies for recruiting, hiring and retaining older workers.

Thank you for selecting NCI Transformation Network as one of your recommended applicants for the WIRED funding opportunity.

Sincerely,



Vicki Byrd
President and CEO

North Central Indiana Workforce Investment Board
www.wdsi.org



1300 Concord Road
P.O. Box 4799
Lafayette, IN 47903
(606) 497-7111
Fax (606) 471-7930
www.tap.lafayette.in.us



January 3, 2006

Ms. Cinda Kelley
Acting Executive Director
Lafayette/West Lafayette Economic Development Corporation
P.O. Box 311
Lafayette, IN 47901

RE: WIRED Grant

Dear Cinda:

The forces of new technology dictate an ever changing skill set of our existing and emerging workforce. Additionally, our local economics are becoming more regionalized around geographical centers influenced by population and transportation capabilities.

For these reasons, I fully support the North Central Indiana grant request for WIRED funds. They will put in place an effective means to:

- Link the existing and emerging needs of our employers with our region's educators, at key levels, enabling them to make curriculum changes that will provide skills that are aligned with the needs of existing employers and those that will be attracted to our region.
- Provide an inventory of skills throughout the region so that a surplus of skilled employees can be directed to any part of the region where a need exists.
- Maintain a coordinated focus of our region's economic development efforts relating to retention, expansion, attraction, skills and knowledge assessment attainment and planning.
- Bring together, as a team, all of the important stakeholders in the areas of education, local government, economic development and workforce development.

The Tecumseh Area Partnership Workforce Investment Board's unique role in this initiative will be to redesign the workforce investment system's business services function to support the development of the manufacturing cluster.

I look forward to working with you and our other partners to grow jobs in our communities, improve the wages of our workers, and thereby greatly enhance the economic vitality of our region.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Smith
Market President, Old National Bank-Lafayette
Chair, Tecumseh Area Partnership Workforce Investment Board



January 3, 2006

The Honorable Mitch Daniels
Governor of Indiana
Statehouse, Room 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2797

RE: Department of Labor grant opportunity WIRED

Dear Governor Daniels:

I am writing to support the submission of the Workforce Innovation for Regional Economic Development grant. This important funding opportunity will help to strengthen the existing partnerships between workforce, economic development, entrepreneurial development, and education within the region. This grant and process helps us do just that as well as to institute life-long learning, investment and entrepreneurial strategies.

The Greater Lafayette Venture Club was designed to provide a forum for entrepreneurs to present their businesses to potential investors and community leaders. We understand the need and value of early-stage funding for businesses.

We look forward to partnering and assisting with the Regional Financing Consortium which will be comprised of area financial institutions, venture capital investors (such as members of the Greater Lafayette Venture Club), municipal and county governments, Local Initiatives Support Corporations (LISCs), and community foundations, as well as permanent membership of Enterprise Council leaders.

The Greater Lafayette Venture Club looks forward to our continued partnership. We are eager to move forward with the initiatives outlined in the application and are committed to its success. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Susan B. Davis
Coordinator
Greater Lafayette Venture Club

LAFAYETTE - WEST LAFAYETTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

P.O. Box 311 • Lafayette, Indiana 47902-0311 • 765.742.0095 • fax: 765.742-6276

web: www.lwledc.org



TONY ROSWASKI, MAYOR

January 4, 2006

The Honorable Mitchell E. Daniels
Governor
State of Indiana
Starchouse Rm 206
Indianapolis IN 46204-2799

RE: Department of Labor grant opportunity WIRED

Dear Governor Daniels:

I am writing to enthusiastically endorse the above grant submission. This important grant opportunity will help the City of Lafayette, and the entire Economic Growth Region 4 reach our economic and workforce development goals. As a city, we recognize that we must think globally but act regionally to address these issues and further our economic development. This grant and process helps us do just that as well as to institute life-long learning, investment and entrepreneurial strategies. This is critically important to reach our goal of expanding and advancing high-wage jobs and creating a high-skilled labor force.

This is an important and significant opportunity for us and the State of Indiana to work collaboratively with many partners on many levels. We are ready to move forward with the initiatives outlined in the application and are committed to its success. Again, we appreciate this opportunity and hope for favorable consideration. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number above.

Sincerely,

Tony Roswaski, Mayor
City of Lafayette



Office of the Mayor
609 West Navajo Street
West Lafayette, Indiana 47906
Phone: 765.775.5100
Fax: 765.775.5248
mayor@city.west-lafayette.in.us

January 3, 2006

Governor Mitch Daniels
Statehouse, Rm. 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

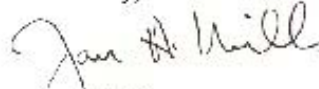
Dear Governor Daniels:

I am writing to support the application of the Workforce Innovation for Regional Economic Development grant. This important funding opportunity will help strengthen the existing partnerships between workforce, economic development and education within the region. As a city, we recognize that we must think globally but act locally to address these issues and further our economic development. This grant will help us do that, as well as instituting life-long learning, investment and entrepreneurial strategies.

This grant will provide our city and region with an opportunity to expand our current efforts in a collaborative manner with partners and communities. We are eager to move forward with the initiatives outlined in the application and are committed to its success.

I appreciate your consideration of the grant proposal and hope for a positive outcome.

Sincerely,


Jan H. Mills
Mayor



January 3, 2006

Honorable Mitch Daniels, Governor
State of Indiana
Statehouse
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2797

RE: Support for Submission of WIRED Grant Application

Dear Governor Daniels:

The traditional automotive manufacturing economy of Kokomo and north central Indiana is in a painful transition. With Delphi's bankruptcy threatening the existence of more than 5,000 jobs and this month's lay-off of hundreds of DaimlerChrysler jobs in Kokomo, we more than ever need an innovative effort that will bring about a regional, integrated approach to workforce development, economic development and education. I believe that the U.S. Department of Labor's **Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED)** initiative will offer our region the assistance that we need to accomplish this effort. The successful awarding of the WIRED grant to our region will result in expanded employment opportunities for our State's workers, and it will allow us to build on our region's educational and high-tech business resources to create further high-skilled and high-wage opportunities.

I whole-heartedly support our region's WIRED application, and I ask you to lend your support to Kokomo and our Economic Growth Region 4 partners as we submit our WIRED application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt McKillip".

Matt McKillip, Mayor
City of Kokomo, Indiana

Matt McKillip, Mayor

City Hall 100 South Union Street Kokomo, Indiana 46901 • Tel: (765)456.7444 • Fax: (765)456.7571

E-mail: mayor@cityofkokomo.org

"City of Firsts"

web: www.cityofkokomo.org



Howard County Board of Commissioners

Howard County Administration Center

220 N. Main Street

Kokomo, IN 46901

Phone 765-456-2234

Fax 765-456-2803

John B. Harbaugh, Sr.

District 1

4805 Mayfield Drive

Kokomo, IN 46901

765-452-6826

Paul J. Raver

District 2

2100 Mohr Drive

Kokomo, IN 46902

765-452-6703

Bradley J. Bagwell

District 3

8474 E. 100 N.

Greentown, IN 46936

765-628-3038

Lawrence R. Murrell

County Attorney

P. O. Box 688

Kokomo, IN 46903-0688

765-459-4186

January 3, 2006

Governor Mitch Daniels
Statehouse
Indianapolis, IN

Dear Governor Daniels,


I would like to show my support for the WIRED Initiative for the new Workforce Development Area 4.

The use of an industry cluster activation strategy to focus on increasing educational attainment, addressing the needs of small business, diversifying industry, and entrepreneurial and incumbent worker transitions, we will engage the leadership of the region with the hopes of transforming the economic climate and changing the culture of the region.

I encourage you to support this Area's proposal.

Thank you.

Regards,


Bradley J. Bagwell
Howard County Commissioner



MAYOR MICHAEL E. FINCHER
E-mail: mayor@cityoflogansport.org

DEPUTY MAYOR'S OFFICE
753-2945

STREET DEPARTMENT
753-4610

FIRE DEPARTMENT
753-3102

POLICE DEPARTMENT
753-4101

MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY
753-7082

PARKS DEPARTMENT
753-6969

BUILDING DEPARTMENT
753-4381

CODE ENFORCEMENT
753-4381

ZONING DEPARTMENT
753-4023

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
753-7775

December 30, 2005

Governor Mitch Daniels
State House
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Daniels

I am writing in support of Region 4 and their application for the Workforce Development Grant also known as the WIRED Grant application.

As Mayor of Logansport, Indiana it is important to not only Logansport but the entire region that we continue to keep enrollment figures up and look to support the future by partnering with other communities in the region to attract and encourage business to not only relocate to the region but to remain and expand in the region.

The funds received would be used for training our existing workforce and educating our incoming workforce to prepare them to advanced manufacturing and other types of agri-business. We would use the funds to help with meeting the goals set forth by the WDSI and Work One.

I hope you support Region 4 and its attempt to secure this grant application. If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Michael E Fincher
Mayor
City of Logansport

br

601 E. BROADWAY CITY BUILDING - ROOM 200 LOGANSPORT, IN 46947
TEL (574) 753-2551 FAX (574) 753-4644

City of Peru Mayor's Office



Jim Walker, Mayor

35 South Broadway, Peru, Indiana 46970
Phone 765.472.2400 Fax 765.472.5815

December 30, 2005

Governor Mitch Daniels
Office of the Governor
Statehouse
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Daniels,

I am writing in support of the WIRED proposal being submitted by Workforce Development Strategies Vicki Byrd.

I believe that the future success of the communities outlined in this proposal, as well as the State of Indiana, hinges on better preparing our workforce. I have made improving education my highest priority in 2005. This priority will continue in 2006, as well. We are also encouraging local entrepreneurs to work with us in an effort to spur economic growth in our community. I have found that this entrepreneurial spirit is building and a new excitement is beginning to unfold.

Even though we are making strides in this area, we still have a way to go to reach our goals. The WIRED program is the vehicle we can drive toward achievement of these goals.

If selected to receive this funding, I can assure you that we will work diligently and utilize funds wisely in an effort to develop and implement a plan that will serve as a model for success in making Indiana more attractive to business expansion and economic prosperity.

Thank you for your consideration of our proposal.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Walker".

Jim Walker, Mayor
City of Peru

www.cityofperu.org



CITY of DELPHI

201 South
Delphi, IN

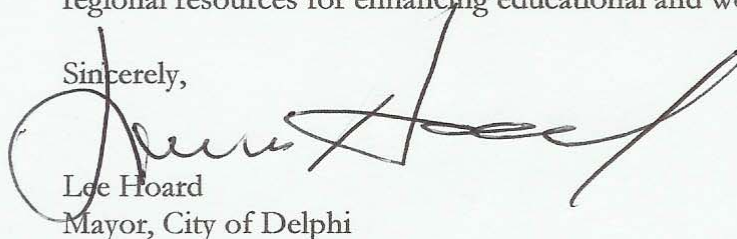
January 3, 2006

Cinda Kelly
Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corp
337 Columbia Street
PO Box 0311
Lafayette IN 47902-0311

Dear Ms. Kelly,

The city of Delphi is pleased to offer our support in the application of the federal WIRED Grant to enhance our regional Workforce Development Economic Growth Region. Delphi has seen a loss of manufacturing jobs and recognizes the need to "re-tool" our economic base. We welcome the opportunity to work within a regional area and take advantage of regional resources for enhancing educational and work opportunities for our constituents.

Sincerely,



Lee Hoard
Mayor, City of Delphi



... together, we are
making a great
community greater.

KIMBERLEY KIM BUCKE
Mayor's Assistant

KENNETH BERKSHIRE, CMIC
Clerk/Treasurer

GEORGE W. LOY
Attorney

GRACE CLAR
Councilman At Large

WILLIAM J. SMITH
Councilman Ward 1

JAMES D. MANN
Councilman Ward 2

JAY LAWSON
Councilman Ward 3

GERALD HUMBERT
Councilman Ward 4

JAMES C. REYNOLDS
Police Chief

GALEN LOGAN
Fire Chief

DOUGLAS ROBERTS
Forest Superintendent

RODNEY POOL
Water Superintendent

JOE L. MCWEER
Waste Water Treatment
Superintendent

MITCHELL BLITTE
Parks Superintendent



City of Monticello

ROBERT E. FOX
MAYOR

January 4, 2006

The Honorable Mitchell E. Daniels
Governor
State of Indiana
Statehouse Room 206
Indianapolis IN 46204

RE: Department of Labor Grant WIRED

Dear Governor Daniels:

I am writing to you with my support of the **WIRED** grant. Economic growth is much needed in Region 4 and the entire State of Indiana. To have the support of regional development and an integrated approach to workforce and the economic development and education, for the City of Monticello is one that I am enthusiastic about being a part of.

This grant will provide funding and ongoing technical assistance and support from a cadre of experts to implement a transformational approach to workforce and economic development systems at the regional level.

For the City of Monticello we see the need to obtain our goals of higher wage jobs, investment strategies that will endure for years to come.

The importance of this opportunity for the City of Monticello and the State of Indiana to network with many partners on all levels is a win-win situation.

We appreciate this opportunity and we are ready to continue Economic Growth in Region 4. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to call me at number below.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Fox, Mayor
City of Monticello

225 NORTH MAIN • MONTICELLO, INDIANA 47960 • 574/583-9889 • FAX 574/583-9244

CITY OF ATTICA
A BICENTENNIAL CITY
305 East Main St.
Attica, IN 47918
765-762-2467

Dear Sirs/Madame,

The City of Attica is a bedroom community of Lafayette/West Lafayette. Our community is committed to implement policy and dollars for strategies to improve our economic growth. This commitment can only be facilitated by technical assistance and support from economic development experts. The City of Attica asks for your grant support thru the Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corporation. Together we can build a stronger region of growth. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Sharon Kaye Negele
Clerk/Treasurer
City of Attica

JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL

Lafayette School Corporation

1801 South 18th Street • Lafayette, IN 47905

To Whom It May Concern:

Jefferson High School considers itself an integral part of our local economy. We understand that in order for communities to be strong and prosperous, the local schools must consistently work with and be connected to the business sector. In recognition of this fact, our school has created academies in partnership with our community.

Jefferson Academies have been developed with the help of our advising consortium consisting of economic development, workforce development, business, industry, and community representatives. A full time position has been created for the purpose of overseeing partnerships. Various partnership opportunities have yielded great strides in the development of targeted programs here at the school.

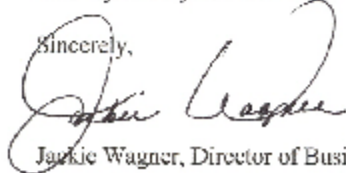
Local business people have advised us and have taken an active role in the creation of such endeavors as a finance academy, an extensive engineering program and advanced science mentorships.

Recently our school launched an Early College Program in which Jefferson students may earn up to 30 hours of college credit while simultaneously receiving their high school credits. This partnership program with Ivy Tech Community College is serving as a model here in the region for other similar endeavors. In fact, we are currently involved in discussions with Purdue University regarding a possible program which would target the areas of science mathematics and engineering. These early college opportunities benefit our students, the local economy and the quality of life in this region. Other schools in Indiana are invited to Jefferson Visitor Days each semester where they learn how to implement similar programs that may strengthen their schools and communities.

We support the purpose of this initiative as we currently experience the benefits of strong partnerships. We are confident that an increased focus on partnerships will yield great results for the region.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jackie Wagner, Director of Business and University Partnerships

A Nationally Recognized School of Excellence

Phone: (765) 772-4700 • www.lafayettejeff.org • Fax: (765) 772-4713

Attachment 6

Letters of Support

Crawfordsville Community School Corporation

1000 Fairview Avenue, Crawfordsville, IN 47933 Phone: 765-362-2342 Fax: 765-364-3737

Dr. Kathleen J. Steele
Superintendent
Paul Peterson
Business Manager, Support Services Director

Carly Marten, Deputy Treasurer
Tobi Ross, Accounts Payable
Tara Cannon, Payroll
Jean Fuhrmann, Secretary

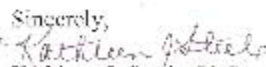
Cinda Kelley, Acting Executive Director
Director of Business Development
Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corp.
337 Columbia Street
PO Box 0311
Lafayette IN 47902-0311

January 1, 2006

As Superintendent of the Crawfordsville Community Schools and a Board Member of Crawfordsville's Main Street Committee, I understand the need to support the WIRFD grant for the newly defined *Development of Workforce Development Economic Growth Region 4*. This grant is critical in the planning process. We must create strategies to entice businesses to locate in our region. In turn, we must have quality schools so business leaders want to live in our communities. To complete the circle, the schools must provide appropriate classes to train the future workforce. If we work cooperatively together, we can train students to fill the high skilled jobs that will be available.

Over the past two years, I have worked with the Montgomery County Economic Development organization to implement a manufacturing boot camp for high school students. Next year, we will be offering a new course on manufacturing as part of our regular curriculum. This was made possible through the hard work and determination of a small, but dedicated, team of individuals who know the needs of our local manufacturing businesses. We have also provided pre-engineering courses designed by Project Lead the Way. These courses have been very popular and provide a defined career path for students. Teachers and counselors need to be included in economic development planning. When school personnel are involved it gives them a better picture of the real needs of businesses and therefore we can include courses tailored to specific career clusters.

The Crawfordsville Community Schools will be very supportive of this initiative. We are willing to provide educational programs designed to meet the future needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Kathleen J. Steele, Ph.D.

Delphi Body Works, Inc.

P.O. Box 30
313 South Washington Street
Delphi, Indiana 46923
Phone (765)-564-2212 - Fax (765)-564-4255



Cinda Kelley, Acting Executive Director January 4, 2006
Director of Business Development
Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corp
337 Columbia Street
PO Box 0311
Lafayette IN 47902-0311

Dear Cinda,

The Carroll County Chamber of Commerce supports the Workforce Development Economic Growth Region 4 proposal. After meeting with the leadership of Region 4, we believe the Chamber can work collaboratively and cooperatively to achieve the programs and initiatives outlined in the grant proposal.

Carroll County convened over 200 community leaders last September to identify the most critical issues facing the County. By a 2 to 1 margin the #1 issue was expanding job opportunities. A root cause for a deficit of job opportunities was attributed to deficiencies in human capital. Carroll County needs to align its workforce skills with the emerging economic clusters in the region. Carroll County wants to build a workforce system that prepares workers to meet the needs of current and future employers.

We firmly believe that through this workforce development partnership we can combine resources to maximize our overall capacity and qualify workers for sustainable career paths.

The Carroll County Chamber is very excited about working with other area like-minded organizations to utilize this grant money.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Bradshaw-Chairman: Carroll County Chamber of Commerce

- 1 -



January 3, 2006

The Honorable Mitch Daniels
Office of the Governor
Statehouse
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2797

RE: North Central Transformation Network Proposal for Workforce Innovation in
Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative.

Dear Governor Daniels:

As a key collaborator and stakeholder in the economic development of North Central Indiana, I am pleased to express my firm support for the WIRED initiative as proposed by the North Central Transformation Network.

This project is important to the economic advancement of North Central Indiana as well as the specific economic mission of Inventrek Technology Park. Clearly, a strategic alliance exists between the goals of the WIRED initiative and the goals of Inventrek. Inventrek's focus is on long-term economic growth and diversification for the North Central Indiana region by concentrating on the creation of new high-tech companies and supporting the development of new technology for existing companies. Inventrek's business incubation program works to accelerate the successful development of entrepreneurial companies through an array of business support resources and services. While Inventrek is a young program itself, the WIRED initiative and its strategies for broader system transformation will work to strengthen and advance the goals and objectives of our high-tech incubation program. Of particular note are the key strategies described in the NCI Next Practice Cluster Initiative and the NCI Entrepreneurial Collaborative.

I am grateful for the opportunity that the Governor's office is providing with this grant, and I strongly recommend the award of the grant to the North Central Transformation Network as the return on investment has far reaching potential for the State of Indiana. If I may be of any other assistance during your decision making process, please contact me by phone at 765-854-0443 or by email at jhendrix@inventrek.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Janice G. Hendrix".

Janice G. Hendrix
General Manager



Department of Development • Jason T. Hester, Director • Tel: (765) 456.7375 • Fax: (765) 456.7387
TDD: (765) 456.7384 • e-mail: development@cityofkokomo.org

January 3, 2006

Honorable Mitch Daniels, Governor
State of Indiana
Statehouse
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2797

RE: Support for Submission of WIRED Grant Application

Dear Governor Daniels:

With Delphi's bankruptcy threatening the existence of more than 5,000 jobs and this month's lay-off of hundreds of DaimlerChrysler jobs in Kokomo, we need to implement groundbreaking strategies that will bring about a regional, integrated approach to workforce development, economic development and education. I, along with Mayor Matt McKillip, believe that the U.S. Department of Labor's **Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED)** initiative will offer our region the assistance that we need to accomplish such an effort. Our region's WIRED proposal offers unique workforce development and life-long learning strategies, innovative investment and entrepreneurial strategies, and reproducible regional economic development strategies. The successful awarding of the WIRED grant to our region will result in more job opportunities for our State's workers, and it will allow us to build on our region's educational and high-tech business resources to create further high-skilled and high-wage opportunities in Indiana.

Please support our region's communities and our economy by giving your support to our region's WIRED application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Hester".

Jason Hester
Director of Development

Matt McKillip, Mayor

City Hall 100 South Union Street Kokomo, Indiana 46901 • Tel: (765)456.7444 • Fax: (765)456.7571
E-mail: mayor@cityofkokomo.org "City of Firsts" web: www.cityofkokomo.org



LOGANSPORT SAVINGS BANK FSB

"Leading the Way"

January 3, 2006

The Honorable Mitch Daniels
Governor's Office
Indianapolis, Indiana

Dear Governor Daniels:

As past chairman of Workforce Development Strategies, Inc., representing North Central Indiana, I am writing to you to express my support for the selection of the newly formed Economic Growth Region 4 along with Fulton and Wabash counties to be awarded the WIRED Initiative.

Workforce Development Strategies, Inc. representing, North Central Indiana, has long been recognized as a local, state, and national leader in workforce development issues. This organization has founded many partnership initiatives such as the North Central Indiana Economic Development District, NCI Healthcare Alliance, and other initiatives with Ivy Tech Community College, and Indiana University Kokomo just to name a few. The Tippecanoe Region also has a strong history of collaboration in economic and workforce development.

I would strongly urge your support of the Economic Growth Region 4 along with Fulton and Wabash counties to be selected for receipt of the WIRED Initiative.

Sincerely,

David G. Wihebrink
President

P.O. BOX 569 • 723 E. BROADWAY • LOGANSPORT, INDIANA 46947 • PHONE 574 / 722-3855 • FAX: 574 / 722-3857





Cinda Kelly
Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corporation
337 Columbia Street
Lafayette, Indiana

Dear Ms. Kelly,

Our economic and workforce development strategies for Montgomery County have been processed with input from our local industries and citizens. As you know our focus is local but our vision is regional in application.

In concert with the region we fully support a regional approach to workforce development and economic vitality. Montgomery County Economic Development, Inc would like to participate and support the WIRED grant initiative and are grateful to be a part of the endeavor.

We know our workforce development initiatives are progressive and necessary for our county to grow. We also know that a regional alliance make us that much stronger.

Funding will be a key factor to the success of the alliance and Montgomery County is in support of the region 4 economic development alliance.

Sincerely,

Bill Henderson
Executive Director
Montgomery County Economic Development, Inc

Phone: (765) 362-6851

www.mucedonline.com

FAX: (765) 362-6900

Tuesday, January 03, 2006

Governor Mitch Daniels
State of Indiana
Statehouse Rm 206
Indianapolis IN 46204-279

RE: Department of Labor grant opportunity WIRED

Dear Honorable Daniels:

The Lafayette-West Lafayette Economic Development Corporation appreciates the opportunity to participate in the application of the *Workforce Innovation for Regional Economic Development Initiative*. As an organization whose mission is to support economic development, and continued growth and well being we understand the importance of working with other organizations that also affect change in economic growth.

This grant provides us with the opportunity to not only strengthen and enhance our existing partnerships, but to expand our efforts throughout the region. We recognize that the goals outlined in the initiative will help to build a stronger and more prosperous region. As a result, we are enthusiastically supporting this effort and are committed to being a strong partner in the implementation.

Our organization is committed to serve the Economic Growth Region 4 as the administrator of this grant and to support the initiatives outlined in the application.



January 3, 2006

Cinda Kelley
Acting Executive Director
Lafayette/ West Lafayette Economic Development Corp.
P.O. Box 311
Lafayette, IN 47901

RE: WIRED Grant

Dear Cinda,

As Market President of Old National Bank I fully support the initiative of the Development of Workforce Development Economic Growth Region Four's application for WIRED funds.

It is critical that the region put in place a means to assess workforce development needs of the entire region so that we may be proactive and responsive to the needs of existing employers and those that we will attract. In reviewing the grant application it is my belief that the receipt of WIRED funds will provide the funds necessary to execute a well defined plan of action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R.D. Smith".

Robert D. Smith
Market President
Old National Bank

RDS/mar

Lafayette Area Office
8 North Third Street, Suite 205
Lafayette, IN 47901
t: 765.720.8660
f: 765.720.8661
oldnational.com



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

David R. McKinnis, Ph.D.
*Director and Associate Vice Provost for
Engagement*

January 4, 2006

Ms. Emily Stover DeRocco
Assistant Secretary
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Regarding: Letter of support for a grant application for the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Initiative

Dear Ms. Stover DeRocco:

I am pleased to endorse the WIRED grant application for the Indiana Department of Workforce Development's Economic Growth Region 4.

My Purdue University program has been involved in economic development for twenty years. We have learned the importance of a comprehensive approach including policy, regional planning, technical assistance, education, and targeted workforce development. Purdue University looks forward to the opportunity to apply creativity and innovation in Region 4 that will support the creation of high quality jobs, the retention existing high skilled jobs, and the education of incumbent workers to meet the requirements of new and upgraded job opportunities.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David R. McKinnis".

David R. McKinnis, Ph.D.
Director and Associate Vice Provost for Engagement

1435 Win Heutschel Boulevard, Suite B-110 • West Lafayette, IN 47906-4152
(765) 494-6258 • Fax: (765) 494-9187 • tsp@purdue.edu • www.purdue.edu/TAP/

DAVID L VORIS

PO Box 455 Wendell, Indiana
46076-0455

Mitchell E Daniels, Jr., Governor
State of Indiana
Office of the Governor
State House
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2797

January 3, 2006

Governor Daniels,

Please consider this a letter in support of the grant proposal for the U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative submitted by the North Central Indiana Transformation Network.

Reading Secretary Chao's announcement of the WIRED initiative, it's evident that the program's goals are to learn to identify and create opportunity via cross-boundary and regional focus, cooperation, access, and flexibility.

The innovation component, however, is clearly the prize, and it seems apparent that the North Central Indiana Transformation Network's proposal offers the opportunity to realize that goal effectively, utilizing much of the local innovation community's existing "infrastructure" (i.e., active business and community leadership, Purdue University and its Technical Assistance Program [TAP], Indiana University-Kokomo, Ivy Tech).

This region has all the necessary tools, and it's difficult to imagine a region better equipped to utilize the WIRED initiative.

It is also difficult to imagine a region with more incentive to reinvent itself. As we all know, Lafayette and Tippecanoe County will soon realize significant investment by Toyota, which will surely result in the need for significant numbers of highly skilled employees and countless suppliers, many - perhaps most - of which will be small businesses. Kokomo and its neighboring communities, however, face an almost certain and dramatic economic downturn due to Delphi Corporation's recent Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing.

Both situations offer opportunity for the introduction of challenging, innovative thinking and I'm confident, given the chance, the North Central Indiana Transformation Network can, and will, offer up new, bold, and workable ideas.

Sincerely,



David L Voris

DLV:dv

Telephone (765) 945-7999 Facsimile (765) 945-7731 Cellular (765) 438-8601 DLV@nci.net

**ZEHNER, MALOY
& ASSOCIATES**

Certified Public Accountants, L.L.C.

*Member American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
Member Indiana Certified Public Accountants*

January 3, 2006

The Honorable Mitch Daniels
Governor's Office
Indianapolis, Indiana

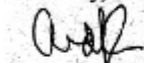
Dear Governor Daniels:

I write to you to express my support of the WIRED Initiative being submitted by Workforce Development Strategies, Inc., representing North Central Indiana along with Fulton and Wabash counties.

Workforce Development Strategies, Inc. has long been recognized as a local, state, and national leader in workforce development issues. Our region has been significantly impacted by the recent trends in manufacturing and the overall transitioning global economy. As such, the region and Workforce Development Strategies Inc. are in a unique position to carry forward this initiative and I am sure, if given the chance, will bring excellent results to the State of Indiana.

Thank you for your support of our region.

Sincerely,



Arden L. Cramer
Manager of Small Business Consulting

730 E Broadway, Logansport, IN 46947 574.722.2550 Fax 574.735.CPAS
Website: www.zmacpa.com